



Sen. Joe Zarelli  
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#### **Committee Assignments**

Capital Budget (Chair)  
Ways & Means (Vice Chair)  
Education (Vice Chair)  
Economic Development  
(Vice Chair)  
Financial Services, Insurance  
& Housing

#### **Senate Bills to Watch**

**SB 5904** – creates prescription drug program for Seniors  
(*passed Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee and is now in Ways & Means*)

**SB 5807** – making changes to the state's BHP (*currently in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee*)

**SB 5725 (Zarelli's bill)** – provides tax and manufacturing incentives to support the semiconductor industry (*passed Senate Economic Development Committee and is now in Senate Ways & Means Committee*)

**SSB 5192 (Zarelli's bill)** – requiring the State Investment Board to invest in Washington companies (*passed Senate Financial Services, Insurance & Housing Committee and is now on Second Reading in Senate Rules Committee*)

# Sen. Joe Zarelli's

## UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

3/3/03

Dear Friends,

Health care costs continue to skyrocket, especially prescription drug costs. Seniors and those in our society on fixed incomes are continuing to see their incomes deteriorate as drugs costs escalate.

While the federal government attempts to address the issue as a whole, I am supporting legislation here in Olympia that will help low-income elderly and disabled citizens in our state get the medication they need.

#### **Senate Bill 5904** creates four programs:

- A Medicaid senior prescription drug program for residents 65 and older with a family income up to 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) by way of a federal waiver.
- A prescription drug discount program, which requires the Health Care Authority to negotiate lower prices for drugs purchased by any enrolled Washington resident 55 and older or disabled, with a family income up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level.
- A pharmacy connection program through the Health Care Authority that provides information about, and helps eligible residents enroll in, manufacturer-sponsored assistance programs.
- Senior prescription drug information and training programs to educate seniors on safe and appropriate drug use.

Washington's Basic Health Plan (BHP) is for workers without employer-provided health care coverage. Because of rising health care costs and the state's \$2 billion revenue shortfall, the current structure of the BHP is not sustainable. Our choices are to change the benefits or reduce the number of people enrolled.

**Senate Bill 5807** makes changes to the program so that those most in need will not lose coverage and will have access to preventative health care without additional costs. Coverage mandates will be trimmed to cut costs, and eligibility will change from an annual income of \$36,800 to \$27,600 for a family of four.

Also, the Senate Republican Supplemental Budget plan includes provisions to crack down on people who, through deceit, abuse the BHP.

Again, I want to invite you to join me and your other 18<sup>th</sup> District legislators at our annual 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Day on Thursday, April 3, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A tour of the Capitol campus and lunch with your legislators is included. Call my office in Olympia for more details.

Sen. Joe Zarelli, 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative District